

TRIED HOBSON'S PLAN

Assault on Port Arthur Planned for a Coup.

TRY TO BLOCK HARBOR.

JAPS MADE DESPERATE STRUGGLE WITH TORPEDO BOATS.

Four Merchant Steamers Sent Into Entrance of Harbor—Furious Bombardment Sinks the Vessels.

ST. PETERSBURG, February 25, 1:45 p.m.—No further details were available this morning of the unsuccessful attempt of the Japanese to bottle up the Russian fleet at Port Arthur by sinking big merchantmen at the mouth of the harbor. The brief details contained in the official dispatches indicate that the coup was planned, according to the usual Japanese tactics, to take place during the night, that it was desperately pushed and backed by eight torpedo boats, which continued fighting until daylight, but that it failed completely.

Praise for the Retzivan.

Great praise is given to the Russian battle ship Retzivan, which lay outside the harbor entrance, for her gallant work in beating off the enemy. Her part in the action shows that the reports of the injuries which she is said to have sustained in the attack of February 8 were grossly exaggerated.

The official dispatches do not make clear the exact number of ships sent in for the purpose of blocking the throat of the harbor, or whether the four vessels destroyed were beached by the fire from the shore batteries or by the fire of the Retzivan. Consequently all the unknown additional details are expected from Viceroy Alexieff in the course of the day.

As he is at Mukden the report of the commander at Port Arthur first goes to him and thence is forwarded to the czar. The report that after daylight floating torpedoes were seen in the roadstead causes anxiety.

Jap Fleet Visible.

According to the latest advices the Japanese fleet yesterday was still visible on the horizon.

The news of the Japanese repulse was received here with great rejoicing and was taken upon as a victory wiping out the score against the enemy.

The official bulletins were given out too late for editorial comment, but the news of the tactical success of the Russian army was prominently displayed. Not one of the newspapers here has yet received special dispatches giving news of the Japanese repulse.

Report From Port Arthur.

PORT ARTHUR, February 25.—At about 1 o'clock yesterday morning the Japanese made a desperate attempt to block the entrance of the inner harbor and dock. With this object, four merchant steamers, accompanied by torpedo vessels, were sent from two sides toward the entrance of the channel.

The movement was perceived by the Retzivan, which was lying in the channel, and which opened fire immediately. At the same time the guns of the forts on the Tigris peninsula, Golden Hill and Electric Cliff were turned upon the enemy's vessels. A furious cannonade ensued, lasting until 5 in the morning. Then the firing slackened and became desultory.

Four Steamers Sunk.

All four of the steamers were sunk. They lay lying in the following positions: One behind Golden Hill, one near the Retzivan, two between the entrance of the channel and the Lao-Thie-Shan peninsula. Two of the vessels are still burning. The cruisers Bayan and Novik pursued the Japanese torpedo flotilla. It is said that one of the torpedo boats was sunk.

Fleet Steamed Away.

At about 9 in the morning, February 24, a Japanese squadron of considerable size approached Port Arthur, and the Bayan and Novik were ordered to face the Japanese ships, which, however, did not open fire until after they had steamed away in the direction of Port Dalny.

Torpedo Boats Uninjured.

LONDON, February 25.—6:05 p.m.—The British foreign office has received an official dispatch saying that not one of the Japanese torpedo boats was injured in the attack on Port Arthur of Wednesday, February 24.

Additional Details via Paris.

PARIS, February 25.—Additional details of the Japanese attempt to close the entrance of the harbor of Port Arthur have been received from most authoritative quarters. These say that the Japanese sent old transport hulks, conveyed by torpedo boats, to the entrance of the harbor, with the evident purpose of sinking the hulks at the entrance of the harbor.

The battleship Retzivan discovered their approach and fired on them, and was strongly seconded by that of the shore battery north of Port Arthur.

The report adds that two Japanese ships were wrecked and lie in Tiger bay, that along the shore another Japanese ship was wrecked and that a fourth lie wrecked on the shore outside Tiger bay.

It is believed that these wrecks are not warships; but, hulks designed to be sunk at the entrance of the harbor. The wrecks are said to be at considerable distances from the harbor entrance, which remains quiet.

This report gives no information concerning the Japanese fleet, which is said to have supported the operations against Port Arthur.

TO SUPPORT RUSSIAN VIEW.

Belief as to Validity of Jap Treaty With Korea.

PARIS, February 25.—It is the better in the highest official quarters that the powers will support the Russian view of the invalidity of the Japanese treaty with Korea, so far as it creates a Japanese protectorate over Korea, owing to the emperor's being under duress. But it is said that no immediate action on the part of the powers is required, as the question of the recognition of the protectorate will definitely arise when the terms of peace are considered.

In the meantime official opinion here is strongly sympathetic with Russia's position, and it is considered that Russia's note to the powers protesting against Japan's violation of Korean neutrality fully protects international rights, as the protest antedates the official announcement of the conclusion of the treaty.

The foreign office considers the announcement confirmatory of the view that Russia's protest to the powers was designed to clear away all her rights and to prevent international acceptance of the treaty establish-

KEEPING IN CLOSE TOUCH.

Foreign Secretary and French Ambassador Discuss War Situation.

LONDON, February 25.—Premier Balfour had sufficiently recovered his health to come from Brighton to this city today to preside at a cabinet meeting at noon. Prior to the meeting the French ambassador, M. Cambon, called at the foreign office and had an hour's talk with Foreign Secretary Lansdowne.

The ambassador returned here from Paris yesterday evening, and apart from an exchange of views in regard to the most recent developments of the war, on which subject the two cabinets are keeping in the closest touch with each other, there is good reason to believe that a settlement of all matters in dispute between France and Great Britain is on the eve of being arranged.

Such questions as Egypt, Morocco, Newfoundland, etc., have been fully discussed by the two governments for some months, and the differences are being gradually eliminated, until practically nothing remains to prevent an early signature of a treaty removing all outstanding obstacles to a complete accord between the two powers.

No Designs on Spanish Coast Points.

Premier Balfour, who, on his first appearance in the house of commons since his illness, was greeted with warm cheers, replying to a question, confirmed the statement made in these dispatches February 20, that there was no truth in the reports that Great Britain intended to seize certain points on the Spanish coast in the event of a continental war. He said:

"I am glad to say that the relations between this country and Spain are, and are likely to remain, of a most friendly character."

The premier added that there appeared to be no truth in the rumor that Spain was mobilizing her forces, although she was strengthening some of her garrisons.

Not Aware of Negotiations.

LONDON, February 25.—Replying to a question in the house of commons today, the foreign under secretary, Earl Percy, said the government was not aware of any negotiations between Germany and Russia.

The under secretary said that in return for Germany affording Russia certain advantages during the war, Russia would support Germany in regard to the Bagdad railway question, and a general extension of German predominance in Asia Minor.

Disposition of Rescued Russians.

Asked in the house of commons today what authority it was proposed to detain at Ceylon the 325 Russian sailors rescued after the fight off Chempulpo, Premier Balfour said the sailors had sought refuge on a British warship. Under the circumstances a British arrangement was suggested, and agreed upon by the government, thought it would best be fulfilling the obligations of neutrality by internment in the men in British territory until the close of the war.

The Japanese government, however, had now intimated that it was willing the sailors should return to Russia on giving their word not to engage in any further war. The British government was now in correspondence with Russia, with the view of settling the question on this basis.

To Patch Up Battle Ships.

ST. PETERSBURG, February 25.—The battle ships Retzivan and Cesarevitch will be temporarily employed at Port Arthur as guardships, in which capacity it has been decided their formidable guns can be utilized to good advantage. It has been found that the necessary repairs to these ships can only be fully made in the dock at Vladivostok, so the vessels will be temporarily patched up and remain at Port Arthur until circumstances will permit of their being sent to Vladivostok.

PORT ARTHUR VULNERABLE.

The rumor that the savings bank will not meet the demands for the repayment of deposits in consequence of the war are emphatically denied by the official messenger.

Japs Claim That Alexieff's Withdrawal Supports This Opinion.

TOKYO, Tuesday, February 23 [Delayed in transmission].—Advices the hourly anticipated here of the third naval engagement which has taken place at Port Arthur. It was known that the fleet under command of Admiral Togo had been in motion, but the nature of the operation about to be undertaken had not been disclosed to the navy department.

The latter was anticipating information, but says it does not expect to receive any before Wednesday. It is thought here that Admiral Togo first attacked with his torpedo boats and then shelled Port Arthur. The opinion expressed by the foreign ministry here is, however, almost unanimously against the ability of the Japanese ships to shell the place without dangerous exposure to the heavy guns of the shore batteries.

Vulnerable at Three Points.

The Japanese, however, are confident that the place is vulnerable at three points on the sea side, and in proof of their opinions is the explosion of a number of shells in the town on the occasion of the recent night fight.

The Japanese once possessed Port Arthur and they have the most complete information as to its defenses, and distance and range. A bombardment of the place should prove highly destructive, as it is narrow and the Japanese fleet is concentrated in the hills into the basin holding the bay and town could not fall to do serious execution.

Japs' Shells Very Effective.

The Japanese shells are charged with a high explosive and are very effective, and it is believed possible to render the harbor untenable for Russian warships by bombardment and force them to put to sea and fight in the open.

It is thought here that the withdrawal of Admiral Alexieff from Port Arthur and the removal of headquarters and records to Harbin is an admission of the weakness of the place and of its inability to make a sustained defense.

It is believed that the Japanese intend to make a vigorous onslaught on Port Arthur, and in possession of the harbor, and the Japanese base for future operations on the Liaotung peninsula.

Eastern War Notes.

Russian videttes advanced south of Anju have cut the telegraph wires between Anju and Ping Yang.

The czar telegraphed warm congratulations to Viceroy Alexieff and the entire Russian squadron at Port Arthur on the able manner in which they repulsed the latest attack of the Japanese.

Yi-Yong-Ik, who was formerly minister of war and practically the dictator of Korea, and considered a friend of Russia, has been taken by the Japanese at Chempulpo and on the same night put on board of a Japanese ship bound for Japan. He went on board in court dress.

It is reported that the Chinese foreign office has agreed to allow the Russian general Mandjur to remain at Shanghai on the condition that she dismantles her rudder and draws her fires. The Japanese cruiser Akitsushima (which arrived at Woo-Sung near here, February 19, to wait for the Mandjur) proceeded north yesterday.

The war office tells the Associated Press that there is no truth whatever in the rumor published yesterday by the Manchurian Dispatch that the 1st (British) Army

STRIVING TO RESUME

Disparity Between Losses and Insurance Payments.

BALTIMORE PROBLEMS

TO CARE FOR 8,000 IDLE WORKING PEOPLE.

Many Families Seek Assistance—Business Houses Reducing Their Forces—Army of Unemployed.

Special Dispatch to The Evening Star.
BALTIMORE, Md., February 25.—The full magnitude of the conflagration is just beginning to be felt by the business interests of the city. While all the merchants were agreed that the loss was tremendous, the adequate appreciation of the real extent of the disaster did not begin to make itself felt until a general resumption of business was undertaken.

Though nearly all the larger business concerns that were burned out are striving to resume, a host of smaller ones, whose life depended upon the prosperity of the large concerns, have gone out of business. The great disparity between the fire loss and the amount of insurance to be paid tells a story of loss that some one will have to bear.

A vast sum of insurance money is being brought into the city, but it is not regarded by business men as anywhere near the sum required to help the commercial community back into the place occupied before the fire.

Eight Thousand Idle.

The 8,000 male wage-earners who the fire made idle, these business men point out, must be gotten work of some kind or they will be compelled to seek work outside of the city.

According to Jacob G. Schonfarber, assistant labor statistician, between that and 10,000 were thrown out of work by the fire. He estimated that four persons in a family were dependent upon these, he thinks that about 35,000 persons were affected in some way. About 500 salesmen, clerks, etc., were thrown out of work, and the labor bureau. For these people Mr. Schonfarber said, it is very hard to obtain employment. He added this morning:

"I am not fitted for laboring, and business houses that are resuming business don't need any help. In fact, they are cutting down their usual forces."

"In order to obtain as near as possible the exact number of persons made idle by the fire, we are sending to all business houses a blank form, which, when filled out, will reveal how many persons they employed before the fire, and how many they now use."

From replies so far received there has been a general cutting down of the forces by business houses. It may be that later they will increase their force to the size before the fire, but that will depend wholly upon business expansion. The nature of persons thrown out of employment by the fire we are furnishing to the citizens' relief fund for such aid as these persons may require.

"The great trouble with these sufferers is that they cannot be put at laboring work. They have held office positions, and the general contraction of business has cut down the demand."

"A resumption at once of building operations might benefit these people indirectly. At all events, building operations will put to work thousands now idle and thus reduce the strain upon the others. Activity in the building trades will develop other lines of work, and thus procure employment for others."

Michael J. Howe, secretary of the building section of the Federation of Labor, said he looked forward to an unprecedented activity in all trades.

"It is going to be a great year for all mechanics," said he. "There will be an abundance of work for all local men and for a great many that will doubtless come from neighboring cities. As soon as building operations are begun you will find that there will be a great scarcity of mechanics. Everybody will want to build at once. While plenty of work for the trades will reflect itself in an increase of business, I fear the great army of idle men, who will have to suffer until there is a great expansion in business. There has been a great contraction of business, and this is a great fear, I fear, will continue for some time. Yet the prospects of great activity in the trades cannot but have a beneficial effect on the whole community."

300 Families Seek Assistance.

Since the fire about 300 families have applied for aid to the Charity Organization Society.

"The most acute distress," said Secretary Walter S. Unford, "is among the clerks who worked for small salaries. These people don't want to accept charity in the form of dollars and cents. They want work."

But I cannot see how positions are to be secured for them. Contraction of business is compelling the business houses to reduce their forces, and it will have to wait until their forces, much less augment them."

The demand upon the charity organization, it is feared, will increase in the weeks to come. The Baltimore relief fund has undertaken to retain all their employees are now compelled by a general contraction of business to reduce their forces. As an instance, the Baltimore city hall has laid off a big army of its clerks that were formerly employed in the central building. Calvert and Baltimore streets. Quite a number of them may be put on again later when the office affairs have been straightened out.

ELECT DIRECTORS.

Annual Meeting of the Northern Central Railway Stockholders.

BALTIMORE, February 25.—At the annual meeting of the stockholders of the Northern Central railroad, held here today, directors were elected as follows:

John P. Green, H. Walters, J. D. Cameron, Luther S. Bent, N. Parker Shortridge, Charles E. Pugh, Wayne MacFegh, Mitchell Jenkins, S. M. Preston, A. Loudon Snowden, Samuel Rea and J. E. Thayer, Jr. The only change in the board is the appearance of the name of John B. Thayer, Jr. in place of M. H. Arnot, who retired.

The board elected the following officers: President, A. J. Cassatt; first vice president, John P. Green; second vice president, Charles E. Pugh; third vice president, Samuel Rea; fourth vice president, Samuel Rea; fifth vice president, J. B. Thayer, Jr.; secretary, Stephen W. White; treasurer, A. W. Hendrix.

The annual report of the Northern Central Railroad Company for the year ended December 31, 1903, was submitted. It shows gross earnings of \$13,330,088, an increase of \$1,851,401, or 22 percent, over 1902. The improvement was due mainly to the repurchase of coal traffic, which was exceptionally large after the long strike of the preceding year.

Russian Receipts and Expenditures.

Commercial Agent R. T. Greener of Vladivostok, Siberia, reports by official announcement that the Russian revenues during the year 1901 were as follows: The ordinary revenues, as estimated, were \$75,540,443.00, and actually collected, \$92,721,429.83. The ordinary expenditures, as estimated, were \$83,176,006.34, and actually expended, \$87,150,435.51. The extraordinary revenues, as estimated, were \$77,250,000, and the amount actually collected was \$84,416,006.23. The extraordinary expenditures, as estimated, were \$62,441,896.75, whereas the amount actually expended was \$100,415,551.12.

For Pan-American Building.

A proposed amendment to the sundry civil bill by Senator Fairbanks appropriates \$75,000 for the share of the United States in a building in this city to be used as permanent quarters for the International Bureau of American republics and the Columbus Memorial Library; also an additional \$50,000 for the purchase of a site for that building.

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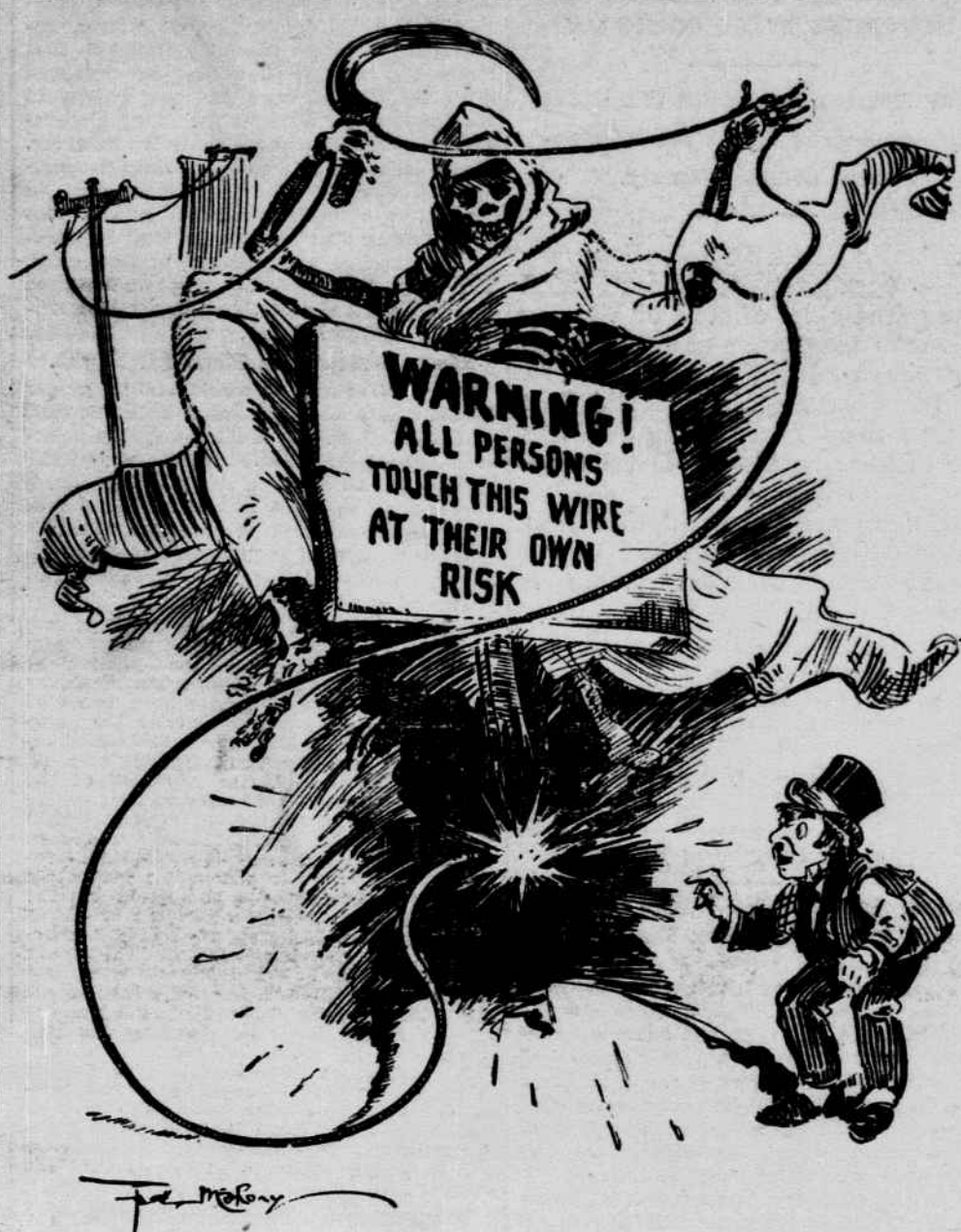
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DISASTROUS FIRES.

Two Lives Lost at Colorado Springs—Other Conflagrations.

COLORADO SPRINGS, Col., February 25.—Two lives were lost in a fire that destroyed three buildings and threatened the entire business section of the city today.

The dead are: Lela Smith, a fifteen-year-old girl, and a man whose remains were charred beyond recognition.

The girl perished in her room at a lodging house, from which her mother, Mrs. Mary Smith, escaped by jumping. The remains of the man were found in the debris lodged between the timbers of two buildings that had burned. The loss in property is about \$100,000. Three horses were burned in their stalls and three others had to be shot.

The fire is supposed to have been started by tramps in a livery stable adjoining the lodging house.

New York Skyscraper Escapes.

NEW YORK, February 25.—Fire in the subcellar of the twenty-three-story building of the American Trust Society, corner of Nassau and Spruce streets, early today filled the lofty skyscraper with dense clouds of smoke, and, occurring during the Brooklyn bridge "rush hour," when Park row was packed with business men and workers in the financial district, attracted the attention of immense crowds of spectators.

The smoke found its way through the six elevator shafts to every part of the building, and forced its way out of the upper stories and forced its way into the adjoining building, which also was rendered uninhabitable for a long time. The only persons in the building when the fire broke out were the janitors' families and twenty-two scrubwomen. Some of these narrowly escaped suffocation, but an elevator was kept running until all had been taken out safely. The damage was estimated at \$30,000, confined largely to the basement and subcellar.

Business Section Wiped Out.

CONNEAUT, Ohio, February 25.—Fire today practically wiped out the business portion of Conneaut Harbor. Among the buildings burned were the Mutual block and the Marine Bank building, with their contents, including the Marine Bank, the post office and several stores. Loss estimated at \$100,000, partially covered by insurance.

Fire destroyed the principal business block at New Decatur, Ala., yesterday. The loss to the eight firms is about \$150,000.

MISSIONS IN GOOD SHAPE.

Bishop Hartzell in London Reports Work Progressing Well.

LONDON, February 25.—The Right Rev. Joseph C. Hartzell, missionary bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church for Africa, who has just returned here from a tour of the African missions, extending over a period of nine months, during which he traveled about 30,000 miles, said to a representative of the Associated Press today:

"The missionary work in Africa is progressing well."

Dealing with the much-discussed question of the introduction of Chinese labor into the Transvaal, Bishop Hartzell said:

"In order to meet the emergency, I see nothing for it but the importation of Chinese under strict regulation providing for their eventual return to China."

The bishop sails for New York on the White Star line steamer Celtic (leaving Liverpool March 4), accompanied by the Rev. W. B. Taylor.

TO AMEND DISTRICT BILL.

Announcements in the Senate of Proposed Changes.

Senator Dillingham today gave notice of an amendment to the District bill appropriating \$125,000 for the purchase of Annapolis Island in the Potomac river. The purchase may be made by the Commissioners or by condemnation proceedings.

Senator Gallinger gave notice of an amendment to grade and improve California avenue from Phelps place to Massachusetts avenue, for which \$8,500 is appropriated.

Senator Gallinger today introduced an amendment to the District bill to increase the salary